

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Please amend claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16 as follows:

1. [Currently Amended] A data management system that communicates with a client terminal, the ~~data server~~ system comprising:

a virtual address connection defining a network address to which the client terminal sends a request reflecting a file transfer function ~~to be performed~~ with respect to a particular data file identified by the request;

a plurality of file server devices, each capable of performing the file transfer ~~server~~ function requested by the client terminal, and wherein each of the plurality of file server devices has access to a common storage device that stores the particular data file to be transferred in accordance with the client request; and

a load balancer, associated with the virtual address connection, for receiving the request and for selecting one of the plurality of server devices to perform the requested function;

wherein the load balancer routes the request to the selected server device to perform the requested function, and wherein the selected server device accesses the common storage device to ~~perform~~ transfer the particular data file identified by the request.

2. [Currently Amended] The system of claim 1, wherein the plurality of file server devices operate in parallel.

3. [Original] The system of claim 1, wherein the request is a data file request and wherein the client terminal sends all requests to the virtual address connection.

4. [Currently Amended] The system of claim 1, wherein a plurality of client terminals send respective requests to the virtual address connection, and wherein the load balancer determines the one of the plurality of file server devices that will perform the server function requested by each of the plurality of client terminals.

5. [Currently Amended] The system of claim 1, wherein the load balancer randomly determines the file server device that will perform the server function.

6. [Currently Amended] The system of claim 1, wherein the load balancer determines the file server device that will perform the server function according to a predetermined rotational order.

7. [Currently Amended] The system of claim 1, wherein the load balancer determine the file server device that will perform the function based on a current processing load of each server device.

8. [Currently Amended] The system of claim 1, further including:
a data share unit for preventing multiple file server devices from simultaneously accessing the same storage location of the server storage device.

9. [Currently Amended] A method for operating a data management system that communicates with a client terminal, the method comprising:

receiving, from the client terminal, a request for performance of a file transfer server function ~~from a client terminal~~ with respect to a particular data file identified by the request, wherein the ~~server process~~ file transfer request is received at a virtual address connection defining a network address to which the client terminal sends the request for performance of the ~~server~~ file transfer function;

selecting one of a plurality of file server devices to perform the requested file transfer function, wherein each of the plurality of file server devices is capable of performing the requested ~~server~~ file transfer function, and wherein each of the plurality of file server devices has access to a common storage device for storing the particular data file to be transferred in accordance with the client request;

forwarding the client request to the selected file server device;

accessing, using the selected file server device, the storage device to ~~perform~~ transfer the particular data file identified by the request; and

~~forwarding, based on the performed request,~~ a file server response to the client terminal based on the accessing by one selected file server device.

10. [Currently Amended] The method of claim 9, wherein the plurality of file server devices operate in parallel.

11. [Currently Amended] The method of claim 9, wherein the request is a data file request, and wherein receiving the ~~server process~~ file transfer request includes:

receiving all data file requests from the client terminal at the virtual address connection.

12. [Currently Amended] The method of claim 9, wherein receiving the ~~server~~
~~process~~ file transfer request includes receiving requests for performing file transfer
server functions from a plurality of client terminals at the virtual address connection, and
wherein ~~determining~~ selecting one of the plurality of server devices further includes
~~determining~~ selecting each of the plurality of server devices that will perform one of the
server functions requested by each of the plurality of client terminals.

13. [Currently Amended] The method of claim 9, wherein determining one of
the plurality of file server devices further includes:

randomly determining the file server device that will perform the server function.

14. [Currently Amended] The method of claim 9, wherein determining one of
the plurality of file server devices further includes:

determining the file server device that will perform the server function according
to a predetermined rotational order.

15. [Currently Amended] The method of claim 9, wherein determining one of
the plurality of file server devices further includes:

determining the file server device that will perform the server function based on a
current processing load of each file server device.

16. [Currently Amended] The method of claim 9, further including:

preventing multiple file server devices from simultaneously accessing the same
storage location of the ~~server~~ common storage device.